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Claims

- A polysaccharide derivative consisting of a biopolysaccharide backbone and organic radicals having a molecular weight < 5000 bound thereto via ether bridges.
- The polysaccharide derivative as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the organic
 radicals have the general formulae (Ia) or (Ib)

where R is a C_{6-24} -alkyl group and R' is H, a C_{1-30} -alkyl radical or a cation.

3. The polysaccharide derivative as claimed in either claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the biopolysaccharide consists of α - or β -(1,4)- and/or α - or β -(1,3)-glucan units.

4. The polysaccharide derivative as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the biopolysaccharide has glucose, mannose, xylose, galactose, guluronic acid, mannuronic acid and/or galacturonic acid units.

5. The polysaccharide derivative as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the biopolysaccharide is a xyloglucan, glucomannan, mannan, galactomannan, α - or β -(1,3),(1,4)-glucan, glucurono-, arabino- or glucuronoarabinoxylan and,

in particular, guar gum, locust bean gum, xanthan gum, carrageenan, alginates, pectins, starch, cellulose and derivatives thereof.

5 6. A method for producing a polysaccharide derivative as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the polysaccharide is reacted under base catalysis with $N-(C_{6-24}-)$ alkylmaleamic acid or a salt thereof.

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7. The method as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the N-alkylmaleamide has been obtained from a fatty acid amine of the general formula $R-NH_2$, where $R=C_{6-24}-alkyl$, and maleic anhydride.

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8. The method as claimed in either claim 6 or 7, characterized in that the maleamide component has been cyclized to the maleimide derivative before the reaction with the polysaccharide.

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9. The method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 8, characterized in that the maleamide component is cyclized to the succinimide derivative after the reaction with the polysaccharide.

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- 10. The method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 9, characterized in that the carboxylic acid function of the maleamide component is esterified.
- 30 11. The method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 10, characterized in that the polysaccharide derivative, after addition of the organic radical has been performed, is precipitated out, preferably using a mineral acid.

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12. The use of the polysaccharide derivative as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5 for binding to cellulose fibers.

- 13. The use as claimed in claim 12 for textile treatment.
- 14. The use as claimed in either claim 12 or 13 as5 biodegradable fabric softener.